

## Facts About Hantavirus

### What are Hantaviruses?

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that may be carried by some rodents. Some hantaviruses can cause a rare but deadly disease call hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. The disease is called HPS for short.

### What animals can give people hantaviruses?

Only some kinds of mice and rats can give people hantaviruses that cause HPS. In North America, they are the deer mouse, the white-footed mouse, the rice rats and the cotton rat. It is best to avoid all wild mice and rats and to safely clean up any rodent urine, droppings, or nests in your home.

### How do people get HPS?

People get HPS when they breathe in hantaviruses. This can happen when rodent urine and droppings that contain a hantavirus are stirred up into the air. People can also become infected when they touch mouse or rat urine, droppings, or nesting materials that contain the virus and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. They can also get HPS from a mouse or rat bite.

### What are the symptoms of HPS?

If people get HPS, they will feel sick 1 to 5 weeks after they were around mice or rats that carried the hantavirus. The initial symptoms are fever, severe muscle aches and fatigue. After a few days they will have a hard time breathing. Sometimes people will have headaches, dizziness, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain.

### How can HPS be prevented?

Keep mice and rats out of your home. Clean up mouse and rat urine, droppings, and nesting materials with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water as outlined below.

## How to clean up a dead mouse or rat in a snap trap and how to clean up a rodent nest

- Wear rubber or plastic gloves.
- Spray the dead mouse, rat, or nest, as well as the surrounding area, with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Let it soak.
- Place nesting materials or trap with the dead rodent in a plastic bag.
- Seal the bag. Place the full bag in a second plastic bag. Seal that bag.
- Throw the bag into a covered trash can that is regularly emptied or contact your health department for information on other ways to throw away dead mice and rats.
- Wash gloved hands with soap and water or spray a disinfectant or bleach solution on gloves before taking them off.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water after removing your gloves

## How to clean out cabins, sheds, barns, or other outbuildings

- Open all doors and windows. Leave them open for 30 minutes before cleaning.
- Wear rubber or plastic gloves.
- **DO NOT** sweep or vacuum up mouse or rat urine, droppings or nests. This will cause virus particles to go into the air, where they can be breathed in.
- Clean up all rodent urine, droppings, nests, or dead mice or rats using a disinfectant or mixture of bleach and water.
- Mop floors or spray dirt floors with a disinfectant or mixture of bleach and water.
- Clean countertops, cabinets, and drawers with a disinfectant or mixture of bleach and water.
- Steam clean, shampoo, or spray upholstered furniture with a detergent, disinfectant, or a mixture of bleach and water.
- Wash any bedding and clothing with laundry detergent in hot water if you see any mouse or rat urine or droppings on them.

**For more information, call the Coconino County Public Health Services District at 928.679.7272 or toll-free at 1.877.679.7272.**

**Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hanta/hps/index.htm>**